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## Early Muslim Invasion of Mithila

BY

PROFESSOR RADHAKRISHNA CHOUDHARY

Tirhut, the country west of Mahānaṅḍā, was comparatively free from the Muslim conquest for a considerable period. According to a comparatively later source—"Bakhtyār Khaljī appears to have conquered Mithilā west of Mahānaṅḍā" (*Riyāz*, p. 47, fn.); Mullā Taquiā is of opinion that Bakhtyār first conquered Mithilā and then proceeded to Bengāl. (*Maasir*, Patna, 1946). Blochman believes that Bakhtyār took possession of south-eastern Mithilā. (*JASB*, 1872). Mullā Taquiā gives us definite information, with dates, about Bakhtyār's march into Tirhut on his way to Bengāl in A.H. 599 (—1201/1202 A.D.) along with the names of the Karṇāṭa rulers of Mithilā. (*Annals-XXXV* 91 ff). The Mullā holds that the third ruler of the Karṇāṭa dynasty, Narasiṃhadeva (1188-1227), was under Lakṣmaṇasena of Bengāl and was forced to be a tributary of Muhammad Bakhtyār (Ikhtyaruddin is said to have raided into Mithilā—*CHI*, III, 42). Bakhtyār firmly held Lakhnāutī, Tāṅḍā, Tājpur, Ghoroghāṭa, Barkābād, and the easternmost limit of Mithilā, i.e., Purnea. Hence in the face of above facts it is not possible to agree with the findings of Mr. Chakravarti, who says—"During the 13th century, Mithilā generally escaped the deluge of Mussalmān inroads. The Muhammadans on their way to Lakhnāutī, marched from Oudh via Bihār and did not try to pass north of the Ganges (*JASB*, 1915-407)". The recent researches have proved facts contrary to the above statement. It is obvious that a portion of Tirhut, no matter whatever be the size, came under the control of the early Muslim invader. It might have been a sort of loose sovereignty as is evident from the fact that the later rulers had to make fresh conquests.

Besides his authority in greater part of south Bihar, Bakhtyār perhaps held the riverine tracts on the north bank of the Ganges from the mouth of the Gaṅḍaka river to that of the Kośī. Since Kośī in those days did not extend beyond Purnea it should be

clearly understood here that his authority must have been limited to that area. Portions of north Monghyr and Bhāgalpur and Purnea might have been under his sway, as these areas fall under the boundary indicated above (i.e. between the mouths of the Gaṇḍaka and the Kośī). Purnea was the eastern boundary of Tirhut. The Tirhut king, Narasimhadeva, paid tribute to Bakhtyār simply to protect his kingdom against further onslaught and consequently ultimate ruin. Professor Askari believes that since Ali Mārdan was allowed to pass or cross Kośī in North Bihar, hence the whole area must have been under the Muslim domination. His conclusion does not stand verified by facts. *Diyār-i-Kośī* was the frontier outpost on the Kośī side. There is no exact evidence to show that Bakhtyār took complete possession of Mithilā and whatever reference, about its being tributary to Bakhtyār, we have, is based on the solitary evidence of Mullā Taquiā. The question of 'domination' at the beginning of the first wave of Muslim invasion is inconclusive at this stage though the fact of conquest can not be denied. Bakhtyār must have come through the side of Rājmahal and crossed the Kośī in the district of Purnea.

Local traditional sources point to the contact between the kings of Mithilā and Delhi. According to Vidyāpati's *PP*, the ruler of Delhi ruled from sea to sea, and he was helped by two young princes, Narasimhadeva of the Karṇāṭa dynasty and Chāchikadeva, the Chauhāna—(*GPP*, Tale 4 Cf—my article—*Vidyāpati's PP—an important source of India's Political History*—in the *JOT*, I, pp. 13 ff). I have identified this sultan with Muhammad Ghorī. It has been asserted that Narasimhadeva went to the court of Muhammad Ghorī and fought for him (for a different account, see *Mithilā*, February, 2, 1953). The good relationship between Narasimhadeva and Muhammad Ghorī might have facilitated the path of Ali Mardan, if we are to believe Askari's assertion (*CS*, 1954, p. 7; for local tradition cf. *MTV*, p. 115). "He could not have been allowed to pass unmolested through an unconquered and hostile region". It may be pointed out here that there was no question of any hostile region, as the people, in those days, had little concern over such issues like the defence and allied matters. The fact remains that Bakhtyār had made tributary to himself the kingdom of Mithilā without hampering its independence. It was in the spirit of friendship that the ruler of Mithilā might have allowed Ali Mārdan to cross the Kośī.

Bakhtyār embarked on Tibetan expedition when there were already in existence independent Hindu kingdoms of Kāmṛūpa, the unsubdued kingdom of Mithilā between the Kośī and the Gaṇḍaka, the Sena power in Vikrampur and the eastern Gaṅga empire of Orissa. At this time Ali Mārdan Khaljī was entrusted with the task of watching the eastern frontier, while Hussāmuddin Khaljī was entrusted with the defence of western march in the direction of Oudh and Tirhut. Hussām is said to have ruled the entire tract from Rājmahal hills to the lower course of the old Kośī, the accepted boundary between the kingdom of Mithilā and Lakhnāuti (*SHB*, II, pp. 9-10). The Kośī, on the side of which Iwaz received Ali Mardan Khaljī, coming from Delhi, was the boundary of Bakhtyār's territory (*Riyāz*, p. 47). It is not known as to what happened to Bakhtyār's kingdom after his death—whether it passed on to Delhi sultanate or to the kingdom of Lakhnāuti. The sources are conflicting and hence the difficulty. Bakhtyār's Tibetan expedition was a total failure and this gave respite to the ruling Hindu dynasties of eastern India. The soldiers of Bakhtyār stood demoralised and he was murdered by Ali Mardan in 1206 A.D. Even his (Bakhtyār's) son, Ikhtiyāruddin Muhammad, who held fiefs between the Gaṅges and the Śoṇ, raided into Bihār and Tirhut. Had Tirhut been completely subdued, there was no necessity of fresh raids into the territory.

Ikhtiyāruddin, after various raids and plunders, appeared before Qutubuddin. The fact, that Ali Mardan was appointed governor, shows that the conquests of Bakhtyār passed silently within Sultan Qutubuddin's authority. Bengāl and the whole of north-eastern India did not prove to be a bed of roses for the rulers of Delhi. Since the advent of Muslim conquest and even after the occupation of Bengāl by the Muslims, the eastern states did not easily accept the unquestioned sovereignty of Delhi. While there was sufficient scope for ambitious princes, both Muslims and Hindus, to raise their heads as independent rulers, the already existing kingdoms of Mithilā, Kāmṛūpa and Orissā, left no stone unturned to preserve their independence. The very existence of the kingdom of Mithilā was under permanent threat of being occupied, sandwiched as it was between Oudh and Lakhnāuti. The absence of modern means of communication, in those days, prevented these ambitious states from being united in the name of a common cause or danger. These Hindu rulers had not yet taken for grant-

ed the establishment of Muslim rule in India, and that is why they opposed till the last. The lack of suitable means of communications, coupled with the internal strife on account of their vain feudal concept of glory, stood in their way of progress or in the way of their unity against the successive inroads.

*Ghiyāsuddin Iwaz*: The exit of Bakhtyār created fresh avenues and opened the way for those ambitious adventurers who cast coveting eyes on the nearby territories. The independent kingdom of Mithilā was an eye-sore to the ruling chiefs at Lakhnāutī, who never gave up their coveting eyes on this proverbial granary of Bihār. Qutubuddin's governor of Oudh, Rumi, was ordered to march to Lakhnāutī and in 1207 he crossed the river Kośī where Hussāmudin Iwaz hurried to receive him and placed his services at his disposal (*Annals*, XXXV, 109). We know that Ali Mardan was made the viceroy of Lakhnāutī by Qutubuddin. His treachery was well-known to the Khaljī nobles of Lakhnāutī and before his departure he recruited adventerous Turks and crossed in 1210. Iwaz advanced to the banks of Kośī to receive him (*JASB*, 1873, p. 349). He restored the political unity of the Muslim principality and openly assumed the title Sultān and exacted tributes. Hussāmuddin Iwaz Khaljī, who supplanted Ali Mardan, extorted tribute from the neighbouring countries of Jājnagar, Baṅga, Kāmṛūpa and Tirhut (*RAMT*, I, 86, Dr. H. C. Rai holds that the claim seems to have been rather vague and put in by way of praise—Cf. *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. I, 374; Cf. *JASB*, 1908, p. 157; 1915, p. 407). So far as Tirhut is concerned, the account stands confirmed by the statement of Mullā Tāquiā, who says that Narsimhadeva continued to send the agreed tribute to Bengāl upto the time of Sultān Ghiyāsuddin Khaljī. This policy of paying tribute enabled him to keep Mithilā internally free. Anyway, we are not aware of the exact nature of Iwaz's rule (1213-1227) in Tirhut. (*Annals*, XXXV, 109H). This much is certain that Iwaz's Sultanate consisted of Lakhnāutī, Barbakābād, Ghorghaṭa, Tājpur and Purnea. After reannexing south Bihār, he pushed his frontier upto the Gaṇḍaka in North Bihar. The Hindu Rājā of the Kośī tract followed the policy of "*Vetasivṛtti*" with regard to the Muslim rulers (*SHB*, II, 29). The evidences hitherto, at our disposal, show that Tirhut sent offerings to Iwaz. (*ED.*, II, 319). The weakness of the one was the opportunity for others. The

instability in political life created chances for those who wanted to fish in the troubled waters.

While we have no definite information about the actual state of affairs, then obtaining in North India, there are scholars who pass judgment on things uncertain. Dr. Kanungo, in his *resume*, has observed "The old Karṇāṭaka kingdom of Mithilā was about this time (1213-1227) breaking into fragments, after the death of Arimalladeva, and these princes in despair of holding their possessions in the plains hemmed in between the Muslim provinces of Oudh on one side and the territory of Lakhnāutī on the other were seeking compensation in the valley of Nepāl. The ruler of eastern Tirhut could not but come within the sphere of influence of Lakhnāutī". Elsewhere I have discussed the futility of such assertions (*Annals*, XXXV). It has to be pointed out here that Arimalladeva was not the king of Mithilā, during the period referred to by Kanungo; nor was there any king of that name in Mithilā ever. Askari, while writing on the Turco-Afgan period, (*CS*, 1954) did not look to that statement of Kanungo, which is confusing. There is no doubt that Iwaz made a bid for overlordship over the eastern provinces. This excited the fury Illtutmish, who sent forces against Bihar to wrest it from Sultān Ghiyāsuddin Khaljī.

#### *Illtutmish and the conquest of Bihār and Tirhut*

The Delhi Sultān, himself, appeared, with an army, with the intention of conquering Bihār and Bengāl in 1225 A.D. The contemporary historian, Minhāj, says—".....the august Sultān, on several occasion sent forces from the capital towards Lakhnāutī, acquired possession of Bihār and installed his own *Amirs* therein". It is held that the progress of the Sultān was arrested at some point in Bihār and a treaty was concluded between the two. Iwaz is said to have sent to Sultān Illtutmish thirty-eight heads of elephants and seventy thousand *tañqās*, in cash, as presents and acknowledged his authority. (*RAMT*, I, 86-87; According to *TN*, 30 elephants and 80,000 of rupees.) *TN* shows Darbhāngā as a part of Illtutmish's empire. Ghiyās was brought into obedience. Illtutmish established *sicca* and *khutba* in his own name and returned to Delhi. (*TP*, p. 46). Illtutmish succeeded in separating Bihār from Bengāl and placed Allauddin Malik Jāni in charge of Bihar. The departure of Illtutmish emboldened Iwaz who expelled Jāni from Bihar. Mullā Taquiā informs us that the

Tirhut King Narasimhadeva helped Iwaz in conquering Bihār. It appears that some part of alliance between the two chiefs of eastern India existed and both of them were decidedly opposed to the extension of Delhi's expansion in the east. It was natural because both of them were enjoying the fruits of independence in their respective kingdoms. Whenever the question of opposition to the Delhi Sultanate came up, it seem that the Hindu Kingdom of Tirhut and Muslim ruler of Bengal used to combine on such occasions.

The expelled Governor of Bihar, Malik Jāni, joined Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud, who was busy with suppressing the Hindu rebels of Oudh. Only two years after his expulsion (624 A.H. 1227 A.D.) Jāni brought Nasiruddin Mahmud (eldest son of the emperor) from Oudh to the frontier of Tirhut and concentrated large forces there. At that time Iwaz was busy with the conquest of east Bengāl. Iwaz was defeated and killed. Nasiruddin Mahmud united the provinces of Oudh and Bengāl under one rule and shifted the residence to Lakhnāuti. He died soon (1229 A.D.) and Malik Alauddin Jani (a Shahzada of Turkestan) was put in charge of the government of Bengāl, while Malik Saifuddin Aibak was made the Governor of Bihār. I do not find any ground to agree with Dr. Thakur, who, relying on the *Riyaz*, observes—"Mussalman Bengāl kingdom in pre-Mughal times included for the most part the whole of North Bihār." (*TM*, p. 398. His statement on p. 399 in the same vein is unconvincing and confusing. He contradicts himself by his own statements later on). Facts, at our disposal, prove to the contrary.

Narasimhadeva, in order to save the integrity and independence of his kingdom, apologised to Illutmish for his alleged complicity with Iwaz. He, by his successful policy, succeeded in maintaining the independence of Mithilā. On the authority of Mullā Taquiā we can say that Tirhut still continued to be an independent kingdom and any contact with the Muslims, either in the shape of alliance or subordination, if any, was due mainly to diplomatic necessity. In view of these facts, it is difficult to give any credence to Dr. Kanungo's statements (*SHB*, II, 22/23) which seems to be his own invention without any foundation. Narasimhadeva ruled upto 1227 as an independent king and was succeeded by his son Rāmasimhadeva who had a very long reign. The inde-



pendent status of the Karnāṭa kingdom can not be questioned on any score, though occasional raids and other disturbances, every now and then, disturbed its peaceful working. By no stretch of imagination, we can bring it under the Bengāl kingdom in pre-Mughal times. The mention of Darbhāṅgā, Tirhut, and Bihār, in the list of conquests made by Illtutmish, and separation of Bihar from Bengal under him are important events of immense political importance. *Illtutmish, one of the greatest rulers of Indo-Muslim history, realised the importance of having a separate administrative unit for Bihar.* Though his rule could not last long, it created an event of great importance in the sense that later Muslim rulers kept a separate state of Bihār for administrative purposes. Illtutmish led an expedition against Lakhnāūtī (627 A.H.) to punish Ikhtyār Khaljī, *alias* Balkā, the usurper. Aibak was replaced by the last Shamshi Governor of Bihār (630 A.H.), Tughril Tughan. Illtutmish died in 1236 A.D.

*Tughril Tughan: (1236-1245)*—Tughril Tughān legalised his authority, as Governor of Bihār, by procuring a formal recognition of status by Sultānā Reziyā (His titles, as known from his *Bihār Inscription*, were "*Ghyās-al-Islām wal Muslimin Mughis-al-Muluk was salatin Abil-Fath Tughril-as-sultāni*"). From his *Bihār Inscription* (dated 640 A.H.), it appears that he was a man of lofty ambitions. He made successful raids into Tirhut which yielded him rich booty but no submission... (*SHB*, II, 46). He followed a policy of aggression, led an expedition into Orissā and extended his rule upto Kāra Māṅikapur in Oudh. As a Governor of Oudh, Tāmar Khān invaded all eastern tracts including Tirhut and carried off immense booty. He was, then, sent to Lakhnāūtī to help Tughān in repelling the Oriyas (*TN*, Persian text, p. 247, Cf. *Riyaz*, p. 77 fn.). As a Governor of Bihār Tughril had to make raid into Tirhut. This shows that Tirhut was independent and hence the necessity of bringing it into obedience, a task in which Tughril did not succeed. The Tirhut king strengthened his position during the time of Reziyā sultānā. It is asserted that Tughān Khān conquered and captured the Karnāṭa kingdom (*Mithilā*, Feb. 2, 1953) and imprisoned its king. It is further pointed out therein that in lieu of his brave services the Karnāṭa king was later on released and respectfully sent to Darbhāṅgā by Sultān Allauddin Masud as a king. The kingdom was restored and the Tirhut king was to pay his tax direct to Delhi (*Riyaz*, p. 74, fn. Cf. *CS*,

1954. If Narasiṃhadeva was the king, said to be captured, the whole question of the Karnāṭa chronology has got to be revised afresh. Regarding the sources, we know that there is a great dearth and even the text of Mullā Taquiā has passed through so many hands that sometimes its authenticity comes to be questioned, specially at a place where other sources are available). Both the *TN* and the *Riyaz* are unanimous on the point that Tughān made an inroad into the country of Tirhut from Lakhnāūtī and acquired much booty. Nowhere do they say that he completely conquered it and captured its ruling chief.

Though Minhāj does not mention the name of the ruling king of Mithilā, it is certain that it was none else than Rāmasiṃhadeva. Askari has confused this king with one who was ruling in 1390 (*CS*, p. 10 fn. For correct identification see *Annals*, XXXV, 110-112, and *JIH*, XXXIV, pp. 321-327). Rāmasiṃhadeva succeeded in maintaining the independent status of Mithilā. He was an important personality of his age and this is evident from a newly discovered work from Tibet (*Vide-Account of Dharmaswāmī*). Dharmaswāmī stayed with Rāmasiṃhadeva at Simaraon and his description of the fort is marvellous. Dharmaswāmī admits that Rāmasiṃha was pressed on all sides by the *Turuṣkas* and had, therefore, given special attention to the strengthening of his fort. It thus appears that Rāmasiṃha was an independent ruler, though hard-pressed under the circumstances. Regarding his date too, what Askari calls "difficulty" is no difficulty at all if we scientifically study the sources.

*The reign of Balban:* The drama of the Delhi court was moving with extreme rapidity and revolutionary changes were taking place. In the east the province of Bengāl was a problem and the signs of rebellion were not out of sight in Oudh. In between lay the independent kingdom of Tirhut, a headache to both east and west as, in a sense, it was an anachronism in the then political set-up of Northern India. The rise of Balban to power at Delhi marked a turning point in the history of the slave dynasty, as he not only subdued the rebels but also strengthened the kingdom of Delhi. During his reign, Ulugh Khān in 1253 advanced as far Bishanpur on the confines of Tirhut and returned with great spoils to the royal camp (*ED*, II, 375). The rise of Balban to power had emboldened Mughisuddin to sieze the masterless pro-

vince of Oudh. By 1256, Balban had driven out its rebellious Governor, Malik Masud Janī, and had harried the provinces as far as the frontiers of Tirhut (*SHB*, II, 52.). After the imperial army had left Mughisuddin attacked Oudh. Tirhut, in those days, is mentioned separately; hence one ruling over Bihār, should not be taken necessarily as a ruler of Tirhut. The Karṇaṭas were ruling in Tirhut during the period under review. The Muslim sources further testify to the fact that a portion of bigger geographical unit, *Diyār-i-Baṅgālā*, had till then, remained independent, because we find Balban advising Bughrā Khān to exert himself in the conquest of that area. Whether this is to be identified with Darbhāṅgā or not, is a problem of Tirhut history. The area around Garhī Pass (Teliāgarhī), was the gateway to Bengāl and might conveniently be called '*Diyār-i-Baṅgālā* or gateway to Bengāl. As a part of Garhī was in the district of Purnea the area may be regarded as a part of a eastern kingdom of Tirhut. Since the route to Purnea was through Darbhāṅgā it has possibly been called '*Diyār-i-Baṅgālā—Duār-i-Baṅg*' or Darbhāṅgā. Possibly this is the only key to the solution, so far as the name of Darbhāṅgā is concerned.

Balban separated Bengāl from Bihār. Bihār remained loyal to Delhi and was placed under imperial Governor. Lakhnāutī was also made a province of Delhi empire, but Balban on account of his pre-occupation with the Mongols, could not keep a vigilant eye on the farflung province of the east. Sultān Mughisuddin Tughral (1268-81), instead of acknowledging his authority, mobilised his army and advanced to Bihār. (*EIM*, 1909/10, p. 113-Cf. *Monghyr Inscription of Balban of 677 A.H.*). He issued coins and caused *Khutba* to be read in his own name. The first expedition against him was organised in 1278 under Malik Turmati, Governor of Oudh. Tāmarkhān Shamshi and Malik Tājjuddin also joined him. The imperialist forces crossed the Sarju and advanced by way of Tirhut till their progress was arrested somewhere between Tirhut and Lakhnāutī. (*TMS*, 30-31; *TFS*, B-83). The imperialists were defeated.

Mullā Taquiā does not make any mention of Balban in his fragmentary account of Tirhut. The imperial army might have simply passed through Tirhut, leaving its status intact. While the reigns of Illtutmish and Reziya have been discussed thread-

bare in Mullā's account there is nothing about the reign of Balban. Mithilā probably did not attract the notice of imperialists whose only ambition was to bring Lakhnāuti to book. The probability of Rāmasimhadeva's neutrality can not be precluded. There is nothing to prove that "the natural boundaries of the land kept the enemies at bay" as Thakur holds relying solely on Chakravarti (*T.M.*, 272-73.). He contradicts himself by another statement on page 402. Cf. *JASB*, 1915, p. 407-08. There are innumerable instances to show that the Muslim army, on way to Bengāl, passed through Tirhut and vice-versa. Why the imperialist army preferred this route if "the land presented formidable obstacles"? It was not the natural difficulty that saved Mithilā's independence, but the *Vetāsivṛitti* which was responsible for its independent existence till its final conquest in 1324. Again in 1279, the Governor of Oudh, Malik Bahādur led an army against Mughisuddin. Bahadur also followed the same old route by way of Tirhut to Lakhnāuti. He was also severely defeated. Then the sultān, himself, marched in person. Mughisuddin was defeated and killed.

*Buhgra Khan and Ruknuddin Kaikau's*: Prince Nasiruddin Buhgrā Khān was left as the Governor of Lakhnāuti in 1282 and he ruled the province for about six years, that is, upto 1287 A.D. When he heard of his father's death and consequent election of Qaiqubad to the throne (1287), he proceeded with a large army and entered the province of Bihār with a view to occupying Oudh. (The account is preserved in Amir Khusrav's "*Qiran-us-sa'dain*"). It seems that he followed the north Bihār route. Nasiruddin marched against him to enforce his own claims and advanced far as the banks of Gogrā in *Sarkar Sāran*. Here he was met by his son at the head of the imperial forces, and some lengthy negotiations ensued. A picturesque account of the event has been preserved in the Muslim chronicle (*Riyaz*, 88-89). Since it was the hottest part of the year, the soldiers foamed at the mouth from excessive heat. The upshot was that the father and the son were reconciled. Nasiruddin was permitted to keep Bengāl (*Ibid.*, 88-90, Cf. *SB*, p. 48-50).

Nasiruddin was succeeded by Sultan Ruknuddin Kaikau's (1291-1301). He was acknowledged as the suzerain of Bengal and a portion of north Bihār. The *Lakhisarai inscription* (*EIM*, 1917-

18, p. 8 ff.) of the time of Ruknuddin is of great importance in so far as our history is concerned. From it we learn that, a) Bihār, which had become a part Bengāl, now again attained a separate status; b) it contains the names of great Khāns and of Ikhtiyāruddin Firuz Aitigin as Sultān and Ziauddin Ulugh Khān, the Governor and deputy Governor of Bihār respectively; c) it does not mention the then Delhi sovereign, Alaudin Khaljī, but records the allegiance of Bihār to Sultan Ruknuddin Kaika'us of Bengāl and d) assumption of lofty titles by the Bihar Governor shows (CS, 1954, p. 9) the attitude of the Balbani lines towards the Khaljis. The recent discovery of the *Maheswara Inscription*, by me, of the same Governor is one of the earliest Muslim inscriptions, discovered in Bihār, confirms the claim of Firuz Aitigin. One should mark the significance of the words on the *Maheswara Inscription* "Hisn-i-Haseen" (impregnable fortress). (*Annals*, XXXVI, p. 163 ff.).

From the *Maheswara Inscription*, it is evident, that Bihār, at least upto the district of Monghyr on both sides of the Ganges upto the vicinity of the Burhī Gaṇḍaka formed a part of Kaika'us's dominion. We have seen above that Iwaz had pushed his frontier upto the Gaṇḍaka in North Bihār and from the present record it appears that Bughrā Khān or his successor Kaikau's extended the limit of the Bengāl kingdom in Bihār upto the area. Probably it was Bughrā Khān, who, on his march towards Oudh, had done it and that was later on confirmed by Ruknuddin. Here, again, Mullā Taquiā is silent about this episode. The extension of Kaikau's power in North Bihār, just a year or so after his accession, amply demonstrates that he was not a weak ruler. The assertion of Sir Wolsley Haig that Kaikau's owed allegiance to Alaudin Khaljī does not stand (*CHI*, III, 261). According to Yāzdānī the high sounding titles of Firuz Aitigin indicated that the relations between Delhi and Bengal were sufficiently strained. The authority of Firuz seems to have been unquestionable in Bihār. The high sounding titles of Firuz in the *Lakshsarai* and *Maheswara inscriptions* embolden us to infer that Bihār, no matter whatever its size, both north and south upto a certain region attained a separate status from that of Bengāl. It does not seem to be very unnatural when we take into consideration the events that had occurred on the demise of Balban. The Governor of Bihār did not lose opportunity in asserting his right and secured for himself,

as well as for Bihār, the independent status. Hence the study of Firuz's titles are interesting. He is called Sultān Shamsuddin Firuz Shah after he took over the Government of Lakhnāuti. He appointed Tājuddin Hātīm Khān to the Government of Bihār. There can be no doubt that he continued to administer the areas, once ruled by Firuz Aitigin himself.

When all these events were going on, the Tirhut chiefs were maintaining their independence, though the size of their kingdom was being reduced gradually. The *Maheswara Inscription* definitely proves that the Muslims were in possession of that part of Tirhut in 1291-92. Sakrasimhadeva was ruling in Mithilā. He is said to have been a friend of Alauddin Khalji. The contemporary literature points to the various successive Muslim raids into the kingdom of Tirhut. We know little about the reign of Sakrasimhadeva whose reign period is also uncertain. Tradition makes him closely connected with the Khalijīs of Delhi. A slight reference to Muslim invasion of Tirhut has been preserved in the account of Mullā Taquiā. Perhaps it was during the reign of Alauddin Khalji (in 1297-697 A.H.).

*Tirhut during the period of Khalji Imperialism:* There are no epigraphic or other records to show the extension of the Khalji rule in Bihār or specially Tirhut. Here we have to rely on Mullā Taquiā who is the only authoritative guide. From the Mullā we learn that four battles were fought against the rulers of Tirhut till the time of Sakrasimhadeva. In the first two, the Maithila king defeated, near about Maqbara, the army of Alauddin Khalji. The second battle was fought at Sakkuri, said to have been founded by Sakrasimhadeva. In the third battle, fought in 698 A.H., the Maithila King was arrested. According to Mullā's account the Khalji's defeat near Maqbara (Darbhanga) was serious. In this night attack, the Muslims suffered a lot. Alauddin Khalji sent help under Razi-ul-mulk Mahmud Iwas to the Muslim captain Shaikh Ismail as a result of which the Tirhut King was defeated and sent as a captive to Delhi (*MT*; Cf. *MTV*, p. 121; Jha, here, believes that the incident took place during the last days of his reign). The Mullā further informs us that Sakrasimhadeva was appointed commander-in-chief of the Khalji army when Alauddin marched against his Hindu enemies (Taquiā's account is confirmed by Bakshi in the *BMI*, p. 484-487; Prof. Askari

has expressed natural doubts about the identification of Ismail. Since Mullā's account has passed through various hands, such error is possible. The contents of Mullā's account regarding Khalji's connections with Tirhut may be taken as correct and we have to rely upon it until further evidence is forthcoming, Cf. CS, 1954, p. 11). Sakrasimha fought against Rana Hammirdeva Chauhan of Ranathambor and thereby gained the favour of Alauddin Khalji. The main strength of Sakrasimha lay in the touchstone of his Minister Vireśwara (BMI, 486-7. He associates the touchstone tale with Alauddin. For touchstone and the Tughluqs, see, p. 495-6).

Mithilā tradition preserves an account of the alliance between Alauddin Khalji and Saktisimhadeva (MTV, p. 119. In his *Kṛtyarātnākara*, Chandeśwara calls Devāditya as *Hambiradhvāntabhānuḥ*. Devāditya is said to have been honoured with the title of *Mantriratnākara* by Alauddin Khalji). In the history of medieval India, Alauddin's conquest of Ranthambor constitutes a landmark because he selected it as the first state for trial of strength with the Rājputs on account of its proximity to Delhi. Vidyāpati also refers to this episode in his *PP* (tale no. 2. In this connection Thakur says "these literary evidences hardly find support in the statements by the contemporary historians" *TM*, 276 fn.). It is true that there is not much of truth in these tales, but on examination of contents, it appears that Vidyāpati used some solid materials before him for the construction of this story (Cf. my articles-in the *JOT*, I, No. 4). Mullā Taquiā's reference to the close collaboration between the Tirhut King and Delhi Emperor can not be rejected outright as a pure fiction. The Tirhut King is said to have gone to Alauddin's court with his Minister Devaditya and Vireśwara. Chandeśwara's mention of Hammir can not be rejected outright as he, himself, was one of important personalities of the time and a participant in the then political life. His statement should have some weight in the assessment of the period from the historical point of view. Mullā Taquiā refers to financial assistance, rendered to Alauddin, by the Tirhut King Saktisimhadeva (*Mithilā*, 9th. Feb., 1953).

Feristhā says that Alauddin conquered the whole of Bihār (*Briggs*, I, 366). According to Amir Khusrav, Alauddin Khalji, after Karra, departed towards the garden of Bihār "to dye that soil with the blood as red as tulip" (*ED*, III, 543). In the light of

Mullā Taquiā and the insistence of Mithilā tradition regarding the independence of Mithilā, it is fair to maintain that Tirhut succeeded, with all means to preserve its independent status (*BMI*, makes a mention of Hammir episode but does not make any reference to the invasion of Mithilā). Tirhut was one of many such states which maintained their independence against the imperial might of Alauddin. We know that Hindus still remained powerful rulers in the Deccan, in Tirhut, in Jānagar, and Coṇḍwānā (*HMT*, p. 79). The fact, that Bengāl Sultān's authority extended upto Gaṇḍaka in Begusarai subdivision (Bihār), the very heart of Tirhut, might have forced the Tirhut king to court friendship with the Khaljī Emperor, seems plausible in the present state of our knowledge than any other conclusion. Alauddin's imperial strategy needed a *filip* in eastern India as Bengāl was hostile. The trial of strength between Alauddin and Tirhut, as shown by the Mullā, and the consequent friendship between the two are indicative of the fact that the imperialist realised the necessity of securing the alliance of this Hindu state against the Chauhāns in the west and also for keeping the Bengal ruler at bay. The Tirhut King, in return, succeeded in maintaining the independence of his country. The good relationship between Tirhut and Delhi was certainly a factor to be reckoned with by both. The fact remains that unusually big number of raids into the territory of Tirhut now became a reality and we have a reference to such activities in contemporary literature. Any source confirming Mullā Taquiā will throw more welcome light on this period of our history.

In view of what has been said above, we can agree with Professor Askari in his observation on the period, under review. The learned Professor says ".....whose (Bihār) rulers acknowledged allegiance to Bengāl, either in loose subjection to, or in a state of rivalry with, and in independence of, the Delhi sovereigns from the time of Muhammad bin Bakhtyār Khaljī down to the time Sultān Ghiyāsuddin Tughluq's invasion of Bengāl through Tirhut in 722 A.H. (1324 A.D. Cf. *CS*, 1954, p. 10)" This is all the more true of Tirhut than any other parts of Bihār, parts of which had already come under the direct sway of the Muslims. Traces of independent Hindu kingdom have been found in Rhotas area (*EI*, XXII, 222). There is no doubt that during this period the separate existence of Bihar and Tirhut had come to be recognised by the rulers of Delhi and they had begun



to feel that Bihār was stepping stone to Lakhnāuti. The consistent efforts of the rulers of Delhi consummated in the conquest of Bengāl during the time of Ghiyāsudīn Tughluq, who also destroyed for good the independent kingdom of Tirhut and annexed it to the Delhi Sultanate. With his invasion of Tirhut in 1324 ends the career of the independent kingdom of Tirhut and there begins the history of Muslim rule.

*The Tughluq conquest of Tirhut:* Harasimhadeva was the last great king of the Karnāṭa dynasty of Mithilā. In the absence of the epigraphic and numismatic sources, we have to depend solely on the contemporary literary evidence. He had to bear the brunt of several Muslim onslaught and it was during his reign that the first recorded Muslim invasion of Tirhut took place. All contemporary literary evidences are unanimous on the point that Harasimhadeva was a great king. He ruled over the entire portion of Mithilā after having totally subdued his enemies (Chandēswara-*Kṛṣṇaratnākara*-Verse 4). Devāditya was his minister of peace and war (*Ibid.*, Verse 7). The best of his ministers, Vireśwara, after having stormed the enemy fort, excavated a big tank in *Dahivata*, a prominent city and constructed a very high palace. He settled the Brāhmanas and granted cities, like Rāmapura, to the Śrotriyas (*Ibid.*, VS. 9-10). His son Chaṇḍēswara, a great diplomat and a successful minister, defeated the king of Nepāl (*Ibid.*, VS. 13 and 15). The colophon of a MSS. of the *Vivādaratnākara* informs us that a *Tulāpuruṣa Mahādāna* was performed on the Bāgmatī in Nepāl in Śaka 1236 (—1314 A.D.). The colophon of the *Dānaratnākara* emphatically asserts that Chaṇḍēswara rescued the earth, submerged in the flood of the *Mlechhas*, probably referring thereby to the defeat of some Muhammadan general.

Even after giving due discount to all these hyperbolic statements, one point is quite clear that there had been invasions, Muslim or otherwise, in his reign. Vireśwara is said to have stormed the enemy fort. This is supported by various tradition and in one place Harasimhadeva is credited with a victory against the Sultān (*NDC*, 66). Dr. Chatterji believes that Harasimhadeva recovered his kingdom after the tide was stemmed, since it was after the expulsion of the Muslims or after their voluntary retirement, that *Dhūrtasāmagama* and *Dānaratnākara* were composed (Cf. S. K. Chatterji and Babua Misra—*Varanaratnākara*, XVII, also, R. Mitra—*Notices*, VI, 135). According to Dr. Jayaswal, the *Dāna-*

*ratnākara* verse refers to the Bengāl Sultān for which credit is given to Gaṇeśwara in his *Sugati-Sopāna* (Introductory Verse 4; Cf. *Annals*, XXXV, 115-6). Jayaswal's contention cannot be held valid for obvious reason. Bengāl Sultan was friendly towards Harasimhadeva as will be evident from Mullā Taquiā's statement in the following pages. I do not see any force in Singh's statement that the Surtrāna of the *Dhūrtasamāgama* was Ghiyāsuddin Tughluq (*ST*, 67. Similar view has been expressed by Mm. Jha in *MTV*, 135, who holds that Harasimhadeva was taken to Delhi and released later. There is no doubt that before the recorded Tughluq invasion, some sort of contest took place between the Karṇāṭas and the Muslim kings, identification of which is not possible in the present state of our knowledge, and that Harasimhadeva was victorious. The question of his being taken to Delhi is not supported by other sources). With Ghiyāsuddin Tughluq we come on a surer footing of sober history. We have different accounts in the various sources about the invasion of Tirhut, in 1324, by Ghiyāsuddin Tughluq.

In this connection, I shall, first of all, take up an account of the rare Persian *Mss.*, *Basātinūl-Ūns*, now preserved in the British Museum. (In this connection my thanks are due to Mr. Meredith-Owen, Assistant-keeper of the British Museum, London, and my esteemed friend Dr. R. S. Sarma of the Patna University, who helped me in procuring the photostat copies of relevant pages of the said *Mss* and also to Prof. S. A. F. Alm of G. D. College, Begusarai, who very kindly read with me the entire text). The indications, relating to this *Mss* in Rieu's *Catalogue of the British Museum Persian Mss*, II, Add. 7717, are misleading. This is a Hindu tale compiled by Muhammad Sadr Ala Ahmad Hasan Dabir, an hereditary servant at the Delhi court, and a secretary to the royal chancery. The importance of the work lies in the fact that it was composed in the first year of Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign. It is a good piece of literary work and the style is marvellous as well as lucid. I am giving below some extracts out of it.

(1) *Basātinūl-Ūns*: *Folio* 10. After having conquered Lakhnāuti, Sonārgāon and the suburbs (land and sea), acquired treasury, elephants, horses etc., he (Ghiyāsuddin Tughluq) proceeded towards Tirhut with a view to announcing God's *kalmā* and *shariat* of the Prophet on this side. The Rāi had a *very strong*

fort as well. He was not very powerful but too proud of his might. He was a tyrannical ruler and had *revolted and insulted the authority of the previous Sultāns* (he was not at all submissive and tried in vain till the last to save the independence of Tirhut). When he came to know of the victorious Tughluq flag, being afraid of this army (then follows the description of Tughluq's army), the Tirhut king began to tremble. Mahābata's force came so rashly that the Rāi had no alternative. His wisdom failed and *left his kingdom in a state of hopelessness and did not think it wise to live there.* (Italics mine).

*Folio 11.* He managed to escape with the help of a swift horse, left the country and saved himself. He took shelter in a cave or a hill. (This eye-witness account does not mention the arrest of this king and his consequent removal to Delhi). The Tughluq emperor stayed there in a big town for some days to make necessary arrangements. The fort of the Tirhut king was *surrounded on all sides by waters and jungles.* The Tughluq emperor got killed those who had taken shelter there and showed liberality to those who accepted his authority. He handed over the administration of that area to the people of the region and was thus relieved of the anxiety.

*Folio 12.* After making these arrangements, the emperor returned to Delhi.

Here we have to remember that the author, then a member of the royal suite had journeyed along with the emperor from Tirhut to Delhi. He refers to the burning heat of the time. He describes most vividly the overwhelming heat, hot wind and hardship that he, with his companions, had supported. The account of the *Basātinūl-Ūns* is borne out by Feristha.

(2) *Feristhā*—on the authority of the *Futuh-us-Sālātin*.

In 1323, complaints reached from Lakhnāūtī of the oppressions committed by the governors of that province. Ghiyāsuddin Tughluq marched in person towards Bengal—Nasiruddin came from Lakhnāūtī to pay his respects, bringing with him many valuable presents and he was confirmed in his government of Bengāl.... It is related that as the king was passing near the hills of Tirhut, the Rājā appeared in arms but was pursued into the woods (*Feristhā* also does not say about the arrest of this king. He confirms the views of Ahmad Hassan. The flight is unanimously ac-

cepted in all accounts with slight variations here and there). Finding that his army could not penetrate them, the king alighted from his horse, called for a hatchet and cut down one of the trees with his own hands. The troops, on seeing, applied themselves to the work with such spirit, that the forest seemed to vanish before them. They arrived at a fort surrounded by seven ditches full of water, and a high wall. The king invested the palace, filled up the ditches and destroyed the walls in three weeks. The Rājā and his family were taken, and the great booty obtained, while the government of Tirhut was left in the hands of Ahmad Khān, son of Malik Tablighā after which the king returned towards Delhi.

This statement, with slight variation, is preserved in Bihārīl's *Ainī-Tirhuta* (AT, p. 13, refers to the arrest of the king. Cf. Briggs, I, 406-7; *Annals*, XXXV). According to *Riyāz* (p. 91 fn.), Ghiyāsuddin stormed the fort of Tirhut. An account, preserved in the *Bayāz* of the Mullā, is important and deserves consideration.

(3) *The Bayāz of Mullā Taquiā*: Ghiyāsuddin Tughluq, in 724 A.H., after suppressing Bahādur Shāh of Bengāl, invaded Harasimhapur. Ghiyāsuddin undertook an expedition against the king of Mithilā because Harasimhadeva had made a common cause with Bahādur Shāh of Bengāl and had helped him on several occasions. Harasimhadeva was arrested and taken to Delhi and the administration of Tirhut was handed over to Ahmad Khān, son of Malik Tablighā. Tirhut was conquered and the stronghold of the Karnāṭas was demolished. A mint town named Tughluqābād or Tughluqpur was established. Muhammad bin Tughluq restored the kingdom to Harasimhadeva and appointed Commander-in-Chief. Later on Muhammad Tughluq was informed of a touchstone in possession of a Maithila minister and wanted to have it (*BMI*, p. 495-96). Since the touchstone could not be procured, he ordered the capture of the Tirhut kingdom and the transportation of the Tirhut king. The king, on hearing this news fled in 726 A.H. (1326 A.D.).

(4) *Tārikh-i-Firuzshāhi* (Barni—ED, III, 234). When the Sultān reached Tirhut, the ruler of Lakhnāutī, Sultan Nasiruddin came forth with great respect, and without the sword being called into question, all the *rais* the *Rānās* of the country made their submission.

In all these accounts with the solitary exception of Mullā Taquiā, the name of the king is missing. All accounts agree to the storming of the fort of Tirhut and the question of the flight, with slight variations. The king submitted and that is evident from all the sources. As the author of the *Basātinūl-Ūns* was an eye-witness, reliance can be placed on his version which confirms the Mithilā tradition that Harasimhadeva fled to Nepāl. The Mullā says that both Bahādur Shāh and Harasimhadeva were released after the accession of Muhammad Tughluq. This act of grace on the part of the Tughluq emperor was done on the assurance of Harasimhadeva that he would regularly pay taxes and that assurance brought in its train his appointment as the Commander-in-Chief. Muhammad bin Tughluq, learning about the touchstone in possession of Vireśwara, wanted to have it. The evasion on the part of Vireśwara, provoked the Sultān, who ordered Majdulmulk, the *mukti* of Bihār to put the Rājā in permanent imprisonment and confiscate his territories in Tirhut. The Rājā got scent and escaped to Nepāl in 726 A.H. Popular traditions do not avoid mentioning the captivity of the Rājā, as Prof. Askari thinks (*CS.*, p. 12). Jhā mentions the arrest of the king and his consequent release and the subordination of Tirhut to the *Subā* of Bihār (*MTV*, 135; *BMI*, 459, Bakshī holds that apprehending his discomfiture at the hands of Muhammad bin Tughluq, Harasimhadeva fled to Nepāl. Cf. Chandā Jhā's edition of the *PP.*). A fort and a mosque were also constructed there under the imperial orders.

How far the above account of the Mullā is correct, it is very difficult to say. In the absence of any other source, we have to accept it for the time being as a hypothetical proposition. In the present state of our knowledge, it is very difficult to ascertain whether Harasimhadeva was arrested or not? Chanḍeśwara confirms that the earth was flooded with the *Mlechhas* and he rescued it (*Notices VI*, 135, No. 2069). Here *Dhūrtasamāgama* gives a little more information (*NDC*, 66). Here Harasimhadeva is said to have conquered the *Surtrāna*, identified by Chakravarti with Ghiyāsuddin Tughluq (*JASB*, 1915, p. 412). This identification does not seem to be probable. The eye-witness account does not mention the arrest of the king and clearly indicates his flight. Did he ignore the event? The answer must be in the negative. The *Dhūrtasamāgama* account may be construed in the following manner. Ghiyāsuddin handed over the administration to those,

who submitted to his authority, and retired. On his retirement, Harasimhadeva returned to his capital and again asserted his independent authority. To please the master, Jyotirīswara Thākur wrote *Dhūrtasamāgama* (the comedy of the meeting of the cheats) and this comedy was staged before Harasimhadeva. Here the king has been glorified. Umāpati in his *Pārijātaharaṇāṭaka* calls Hariharadeva a powerful king, whose name was a terror to the *Yavanas* (*Yavanavanachhedana karāla karabāleṇa*.....*Hindūpati Śrī Hariharadeven*, *JBORS*, III, p. 28). It was about the time of Ghiyāsuddin Tughluq's invasion, that Harasimhadeva fled to Nepāl. The date of flight is also known to us from the traditional sources to be 1326 A.D. (Cf. *Mithilāmoda*). The point relating to his arrest needs further investigation. (*HCIP-IV*—Chapter on the Mithilā; Also L. Petech. *Medieval History of Nepal*).

In connection with the reign of Ghiyāsuddin Tughluq, we have to bear in mind that Zia Barani differs from Ibn Batuta on many occasions and hence the difficulty in arriving at any definite truth. All authorities are unanimous on the one central point and *that is* that the kingdom of Tirhut was destroyed and its capital Simraon was sacked, where Harasimhadeva was ruling (Cf. Allen—*Cambridge Shorter History of India*, p. 118). The last semblance of independent Tirhuta kingdom vanished.

*Muhammad bin Tughluq*: Muhammad bin Tughluq inherited a large empire and a treasury full of wealth. Darbhanga was the capital of Tirhut under the Tughluqs. Tirhut came to be known as Tughluqpur or Tughluqābād. He erected a big palace there. The vast empire was divided into twenty three provinces. In one of the accounts, the name of Tirhut is missing but that of Bihar is there (*Masālika-ul-Absār*; Tirhut is also missing from Ibn Batuta's list). Barani makes a passing reference to some of the provinces in which Bihar is missing but Tirhut is mentioned... (Barani; *Bibliotheca Indica Series*, p. 468; Cf. an article published in the *Vostokovedeniya*, XXII, 1957, pp. 115-129, Moscow). Barani gives a list of the following twelve provinces of the Delhi empire, viz., Delhi Telang, Kāmpila, Dwārsamūdra, Mā'bar, Tirhut, Lakhnāutī, Satgāon, Sonārgāon Gujerāt, Mālwa and Deogir. Muhammad Tughluq increase it to twenty-three including Bihār. Tirhut was an important part of the empire and a mint town. It was made a separate province under the Tughluqs.

In his learned treatise, Dr. Mahdi Hussain has brought for discussion Tale 4 of Vidyapati's PP and has (HMT, 97) identified Muhammad, following Grierson certainly, with Muhammad bin Tughluq. Its historicity, at the very root, is doubtful because Narasimhadeva of the Karnāṭa dynasty cannot be a contemporary of Muhammad Tughluq (1325-51). (For details, Cf. JOT, I, No. 4; JASB, 1915, p. 412, *Annals*, XXXV). The learned Doctor has blindly accepted the argument advanced by Grierson without an eye on historical fact. Even if that point be left out, Muhammad Tughluq's control over Tirhut is an established fact. It was vigorous and effective. He appointed Qilādar Shāh Sufi at Hara-simhapur after the flight of the king. He built a mosque and a fort which were destroyed by an earthquake in 1605. The inscription on the mosque is dated 726 A.H., the text of which is given below:

*"Qallalah otaala man jaa bill hasnata falahu ashra amsalah bina Masjid al mujahid fi sabilillah Muhammad bin as Sultan as Sayeed is shaheed il ghazi ghiyasuddin waddin anarullah burhanahu is soyalat an Tarikhi Bena ehi fakul howal masjid alasqa fisanat-i-sitta wa ishreen wasabaa mayaat al hijriya un nabrewah 726"* Text of Bedibana Inscription *"tamen shut in walqat-ul-aqtab-ul Akber Dar Ahad-i-sahanshah-i-adil-shah muhammad bin Tughluq lazala mulkoku-wa-daulata hu anaam Bazail izzat daulatwaddin quazi muhar i khas wa Ziknullah Bahar o ain banda Mahmud bin Yusuf Al muluqqub Bistum mah i Rabi ul awwaal sanata saba wa anbeena Mayuta"* (747—1376-7 Cf. MT.). The Bedibana Inscription further brings to light the following facts about the Tughluq rule in Tirhut (JBRS, XLI, p. 164 ff.). ".....a reference is intended to the fort mentioned in the Gazetteer description of the Bedibana village. The structure was made over to Izzuddin for his administration as *Quāzi*, who was a judicial officer, primarily with some ecclesiastical functions." As land revenue was the principal source of revenue, demand of the state varied in different times and places. It was a part of Tughluq's policy to tax the Hindus in such a way as not to allow them to be blinded by wealth. to become discounted and rebellious. These rulers wanted to reduce them to poverty and destitution (IHQ, VII, 41; ED, III, 230 ff.).

The establishment of a mint town at Tughluqpur is a remarkable point in the history of Tirhut. As an important currency

town, Tirhut must have wielded some influence over the economic life of the area. Out of the two copper coins discovered from Tirhut, one is dated 731 A.H. and they bear the inscription: "province of Tirhuta or Tughluqpur". Of the coins recently discovered at Jayamañglāgarh, one coin bears the name of one more mint town, *Darul-i-khilafat*. There are two more Tughluq silver coins in the Jaimanglagarh finds, the reading of which is as follows: (a) *Ghazi Ghiyasuddiniya walden Abu Mozzaffar*: "Tughluq Shah Sultan Nasir Amirul Momin; (b) *Al Mojahed Fu Sabilil Muhammad bin Tughluq Shah*". The Tirhut copper coins of Muhammad Tughluq read: "He obeys the Sultān-surely he obeys the merciful; struck in the territory of Tughluqpur alias Tirhut, in the year seven hundred and thirty "Reverse" Stamped as a *tanqqāh* current in the reign of the slave hopeful of mercy, Muhammad Tughluq (C. J. Brown—*Coins of India*). The coins, extant, reflect almost every important change in the emperor's policy and represent different phases. Lanepool holds that Muhammad Tughluq's forced currency was not intended to defraud. He devoted much attention to his coinage and dealt with it in a scientific way (Lanepool *Medieval India*, p. 93 ff.). In the words of Thomas, "so indeed did he consider all matters connected with the public currency that one of the earliest acts of his reign was to remodel the coinage, to adjust its division to the altered relative values of the precious metals and to originate new and more exact representation of the subordinate circulation." (*TP*, 207, 233). His name shone upon the issues of various mints. His coins are important for the study of the Tughluq history.

*Hājī Ilyas*: It was during the rule of the Tughluqs that Hājī Ilyas invaded Tirhut. Hājī Ilyas was entrusted with the task of supervision, while Kāmeśwara Thākura of Oini was charged with the responsibility of collecting taxes. The accession of Hājī Ilyas (1342-1357) to the throne of Bengāl constitutes a landmark in the history of eastern India. Taking advantage of the adventurous policy of the Delhi emperor, the rulers of Gorakhpur, Champāran and Tirhut had thrown off the allegiance and had become practically independent. Isāmi, in his *Futuh-us-Sālātin* says that a rebel had proclaimed himself king at Lakhnāūtī in full enjoyment of the parasol and the throne. He had been supported by the whole of Tirhut and Gauda, the spirit of rebellion having spread everywhere (*PIHC*, XVI, 187). The spirit of revolt was visible every-



where within the Tughluq empire on account of the capricious and whimsical policy of Muhammad Tughluq (*ED*, III, 242-3; *SHB*, II, p. 95 ff.). The ruling chiefs of eastern India had begun to raise their heads. Though Hāji Ilyas used to send presents to Delhi, every now and then, he was virtually independent—(*RAMT*, I, 309, 317, 324, 348-49; Cf. *Riyaz*, 98-103). The extinction of Delhi's authority and the absence of union among the Hidu Rājās afforded opportunities to Haji Ilyas for ambitious and imperialistic schemes.

Hāji Ilyas invaded Tirhut with success. The subjugation of Tirhut was followed by a very daring incursion into Napal in 1346 A.D., the date of the *Bedibana Inscription*, discovered in the district of Motihari. Professor Askari says "he (Ilyas) must have followed Bengal route for reaching the hills of Svayambhunātha and sacking the sacred temple of Paśupati, near Khātmandu, as it was much later that he overran Tirhut and advanced via Benares upto Bahraich." (*CS*, p. 13). Jayaswal following the *Cambridge History* (*CHI*, III, 175-263) fixes the date of the invasion of Tirhut at 1352 A.D. (*JBORS*, XXII, p. 88-90). According to the epigraphic and *Vamśavalī* records, the Bengal Sultān marched with a large army and caused heavy damage. The ruling king was Jayarājadeva and the invasion took place in 1346. Accidentally these two dates synchronise with each other and naturally call for an accepted theory (1346 as the date for the invasion of Mithilā by Ilyas) to be changed. Sir Jadunath and the writers following him have accepted it without any discussion on the subject (*SHB*, II, 103-104; *TM*, 407). Nepal had been practically free from the Muslim inroads till 1346 (Cf. D. R. Regmi *Ancient and Medieval Nepal*, p. 153 ff. Except Bendall, Ilya's attack is omitted by all the chronicles). The route, traversed by Ilyas, to reach the valley of Nepāl, is still controversial. The *Bedibana Inscription* of 1346 is an indication of the fact that the area of Tirhut (specially western part) was under the direct control of the Tughluqs and hence it was impossible for Ilyas to follow that route. Regmi believes that Ilyas must have entered through the present district of Purnea and travelling due west must have taken the route of Bagmati (*Ibid*—The invasion took place in the month of November—December with a huge force). It was only after this conquest that Ilyas probably thought of attacking Tirhut. Perhaps the death of Muhammad Tughluq emboldened him to take such a daring step of attacking against a neighbouring territory, Tirhut, which

had only recently been annexed to the Delhi sultanate. The invasion of Tirhut must have taken place sometime between 1347 and 1352 A.D., because it was in 1352-53, that he had to relinquish his hold on pressure by the Tughluqs (*CHI*, III, 175-263). The latest work on Mithila, *TM*, does not discuss the point at all and unhesitatingly accepts Sir Jadunath's version. It is not true that no authentic date of this invasion can be given, but, then, then one thing is sure that it can not be 1346).

Ilyas's westward campaign was a grand success. He extended his power upto Bahraich in the west. He, not only conquered Tirhut but also succeeded in stabilising his conquests by making necessary administrative arrangements there. He divided Tirhut into two parts with Būrhī Gaṇḍaka as the dividing line. He is credited with having founded the city of Shamsuddinpur (Samastipur) and laid the foundation of Hājipur, which was destined to be the central point in the determination of Muslim policy in North Bihār. According to Al Badāoni, he had built a number of forts which the infidels had destroyed (*RAMT*, I, 348-9). The municipal records confirm Mullā Taquiā's statement about the foundation of Samastipur by Hājī Ilyas). Mullā tells us that Kāmeśwara of the Oinwāra dynasty objected to the division of Tirhuta but to no purpose. Ilyas controlled the area from Nepāl Terai to Begusarai. Feristhā confirms the fact that he was the founder of Hājipur. The Mullā further says that his power extended from Darbhanga to the mouth of Kośī. The wishes of the people were not taken into consideration and the opposition was terrorised into silence. Kāmeśwara's loyalty to Delhi was a known fact, because his kingdom was a gift from Delhi. Hence Ilyas's policy of repression and division of Tirhut should not be taken as something extraordinary. He realised the strategic importance of Hājipur. A grip over the territory was maintained through the two newly founded cities. It is apparent that the whole of Tirhut, for the time being, was groaning under the deadweight of Ilyas's arm. It appears that his Tirhut career was meteoric in character. The Rājās of Champaran and Gorakhpur transferred their allegiance to him.

*Firuz Tughluq*: The startling victory of Hājī Ilyas and his dream of imperial suzerainty opened the eyes of Firuz Tughluq. Firuz had only settled down his affairs in Delhi, when he heard of the rapacious activities of Ilyas. We have seen that Muhammad Tughluq had appointed him to supervise the territory of Tirhut,

which, by now, he had conquered. Delhi considered it as an act of betrayal and an open defiance of the imperial authority. Firuz could not tolerate the defiance of imperial authority and as such proceeded to measure swords with the Bengāl sultān.

Afif gives the following account of the march of Firuz Tughluq (*ED*, III, 293-94). "Firuz marched triumphantly in great strength . . . . .when he arrived on the banks of Kośi. . . . .he found the army of Shamsuddin posted in force on the other side, near its junction with the Ganges. The passage appeared difficult, so the Sultān marched hundred Kośa up the Kośi, and crossed it below Champāran (?) at the place where the river issues from the mountain but the waters ran with such force that the stones of five hundred maunds weight were borne along with the shawls. The Sultān ordered a line of elephants to be drawn across the river, both above and below the fort, to facilitate the passage. The upper line was to break the force of the current; the lower line was furnished with ropes, to which men, carried away by the stream, might cling. . . . .the Sultān succeeded in crossing the river and followed Shamsuddin by way of Champāran and Racap(?)." Then follows details of the battle (*ED*, III, 294-95).

The above description deserves notice in view of the fact that it gives certain indications:— a) The king went straight to the bank of the Kośi, b) Ilyas's force was on the other side of near its junction with the Ganges. It appears that the two armies were face to face on either side of the junction, i.e., somewhere near or opposite Rajmahal, c) the Sultān marched hundred Kośa up the Kośi and crossed it below Champāran(?), where the river issues from the mountain. Be it noted here that the Kośi issues from the Himalaya near Bārāhakṣetra and not near Champāran. The possibility is that Firuz moved back and followed the *terai* route to Bengāl. For to the north near the present borders of Nepāl, there is a place called Jiaran, where the Kośi narrows down to a rushing mountain torrent, being easily fordable (*SHB*, II, 106). Perhaps Afif confused Jiāran with Champāran. Racap may be identified with Rājwārā or Rājabirāja in the Nepāl territory and on way to the east near Kośi. It is a simple conjecture. Firuz brought his troops to this point and safely got them across the river with the help of the local Rājās. Ilyas retreated down the Ganges

Barani does not mention these places but simply states that the imperial march was through Gorakhpur, Kharoṣa and Tirhut. Chakravarti believes that Barani's Kharoṣā, between Gorakhpur and Tirhut, is probably to be identified with Champāran (*JASB*, 1913, p. 413). Out of these two accounts, one point is clear that his route lay across the Ganges to the Kośi river. Feristhā says that on his arrival in the neighbourhood of Gorakhpur, the Zemin-dāras of that place made usual presents to him and they were admitted to pay their respects. Udi Simha, Muqaddam of that place, came to pay his respects and presented him suitable offerings in money. The Rājā of Gorakhpur also paid up the arrears (*SIH*, S, p. 67; Dow's translation, *Ibid.*, fn. 31.) "Ilyas was the master of all Bengāl and Bihār upto Benares". There is no mention of Kośi here). In his campaign against Ilyas, Firuz was helped by the local Rājās (Cf. K.K. Basu, 'The House of the Tughluqs' in *JASB*, XXVI, 253-N.S.). Mullā Taquiā affirms that Kāmeśwara presented himself before Firuz with suitable offerings and promised to continue as a tributary. The aim of Firuz's conquest was to re-annex the territory from the Kośi to Oudh. After subjugating the chiefs of Gorakhpur, Kharoṣa and Tirhut he made necessary administrative arrangements for the territory from Sarayū to Kośi. Then he carried on his operations against the fort of Ekadalā, where Ilyas had entrenched his position very strongly. Afif's account says that he did not annex Bengāl (*ED*, III, 294-5; *JASB*, 1915, p. 413). The peace was concluded and the king returned to Delhi without effecting his object. Later on presents were sent to Firuz Shah (*SIH*, S, p. 67-69).

When the Sultān on his return journey arrived at the bank of river Kośi, he found that rains had set in. He ordered the troops to embark in boats. The whole army thus crossed (*ED*, III, 298). The account throws some light on the flood of the Kośi, Kośi, when in spate, is dangerous. Perhaps this was the impelling force behind Firuz's aim to appoint officers to examine the banks of all water-courses, and report how the inundations extended. If any village went to ruin, he dismissed the officers in disgrace (*IBID*, 302). After his return he consolidated his position in the Doab. Firuz's authority in Bihār is proved by a Jain stone inscription which refers to Malik Vayu as the *Māṇḍalika* (or *Muqti* or Governor) and Nasiruddin as *Shahnā* or the *Kotwāla* (*JBORS*, V; Cf. My "Select Inscriptions of Bihār").

Firuz had to march this side for the second time in 759 A.H. to suppress the son and successor of Hāji Ilyas, Sikandara Shāh (His coins have been found in different parts of Tirhut). Sikandara Shāh aspired to revive the pristine glory of his paternal kingdom and as such began to show signs of his rebellious activities. Firuz marched via Gorakhpur, Chakait and Tirhut and on his return to Jaunpur in 761 A.H., he marched from there towards Jājnagar by way of Bihār, where, according to *Sirat-I-Firuzshāhi*, he reached in the spring of 762 A.H. As regards North Bihār, Barani refers to his frequent visit to Tirhut, which was brought into subjection and made loyal tributary as in the past. We know that during his expedition against Sindh, Khān-i-Jehān demanded the despatch for men to all the various dependencies of the state, viz, Badāun, Kanauja, Sāndil Oudh, Jaunpur, Bihār, Tirhut, Chanderi, Dhār and other states (*ED*, III, 333).

Mullā Taquiā tells us that in 1353, when Firuz came to Tirhut, Kāmeśwara and other Zemindāras submitted and promised help against Ilyas. It was through the help of the people of Tirhut that Firuz could get across the river Kośī. Firuz destroyed the division of Tirhut, created by Ilyas and re-united the two parts under his own hegemony. For the administrative purposes he appointed a *quazi* and other officials. These officers were to look to the maintenance of the imperial authority in Tirhut. It was nothing more than a re-assertion of the Tughluq authority in Tirhut. On many issues of Tirhut history, where Barani is silent, Mullā Taquiā is not explicit. There is no reference in Barani to show that there was a meeting between Kāmeśwara and Firuz. Since there is no question of meeting in Barani's account, it is futile to hope for a reference about his dethronement as Thakur thinks (*TM*, 408). The Mullā hints at a point which seems to be reasonable. Firuz had some doubt about the loyalty of Kāmeśwara and hence the appointed Bhogīswara as a king of Tirhut. The fact is borne out by Vidyāpati (Cf. H. P. Sastri-*Kīrtilatā*, p. 4, *Piyasakha bhani Piyarojasāh surtāna samānala*). In the present state of our knowledge, we have to depend on this solitary piece of evidence so far Mithilā's relation with Firuz Tughluq is concerned.

## ABBREVIATIONS USED :—

1. *Annals*—*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.*
2. *NDC*—*Nepal Darbar Catalogue.*
3. *ST*—*History of Tirhut* by S. N. Singh.
4. *MTV*—*Mithilā Tattva Vimarsa* by Parameswara Jha.
5. *AT*—*Aini-Tirhut* by Biharilal.
6. *BMI*—*Mithilā bhasā maya Itihāsa* by Mukunda Jha Bakshi.
7. *TM*—*History of Mithilā* by Upendra Thakur.
8. *ED*—*Elliot & Dawson.*
9. *CS*—*Current Studies.*
10. *PP*—*Puruṣaparikṣa.*
11. *JASB*—*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.*
12. *JOT*—*Journal of Oriental thought.*
13. *JBORS*—*Journal of the Bihar & Orissa Research Society.*
14. *JBRS*—*Journal of the Bihar Research Society.*
15. *CHI*—*Cambridge History of India.*
16. *HMT*—*Rise & Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq* by Mahdi Hussain.
17. *MT*—*Mulla Taquia.*
18. *IHQ*—*Indian Historical Quarterly.*
19. *TP*—*Chronicles of Pathan Kings* by Thomas.
20. *PIHC*—*Proceedings of Indian History Congress.*
21. *RABT*—*Ranking's Al Badaoni.*
22. *SHB*—*History of Bengal* edited by Sir Jadunath Sarkar.
23. *SIH*—*Studies in Indian History* (Sushil Gupta Edn.).
24. *Riyaz*—*Riyaz-us-Salatin.*
25. *SB*—*History of Bengal* by Stewart.
26. *TN*—*Taaqat-i-Nasiri.*
27. *EIM*—*Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica.*
28. R. K. Choudhary—*History of Bihar.*
29. Do. (Edited)—*G. D. College Bulletin* No. 4.
30. Do. *Mithilāka Samsīpta Rājanitika Itihāsa* (in Maithili—Darbhanga, 1961).

—The detailed account of the *History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut* by the writer (1200-1765 A.D.) is being published serially in the *Journal of Indian History*, Trivandrum. It is for the first time that an attempt, in this direction, has been made on scientific lines. The history of the period, under review, is yet unwritten and the present attempt is this a pioneer work of immense importance.

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