



Punjab Under the Maumluk Dynasty (1206-1290)

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ABSTRACT

During the sultanate period, the Punjab enjoyed a position of distinct prestige and status politically. Whenever there was a revolt in Delhi, Punjab in one form or another was invariably associated with it. Qutab-ud-Din Aibak, realizing the strategic position and political importance of Punjab, shifted his capital from Delhi to Lahore. The Ghori nobles of the Punjab placed Aram Shah on the throne. But Iltutmish wrested the throne from him. That was the first revolt in which the Punjab suffered a virtual defeat. To save Sultanate specially Punjab, Iltutmish followed, perhaps, a deliberate policy by allowing his neighbors to weaken one another and intervening-as he did on Qubacha's behalf against Jalal-ud-Din Mangbarni only when it was absolutely necessary, he was then able to eliminate these competitors one by one. Balban, who after Iltutmish was the most powerful Sultan in the line of the Mamluk Dynasty, started his career in Punjab.

When Muhammad Ghori was murdered, Quatab-ud-din Aibak was able to move from Delhi to Lahore and to take up his quarters as ruler there on 26 June 1206.

There were many slaves and lieutenants of Muhammad Ghori who were ambitious and held high posts. This threatened the Turkish Empire in India with dissolution. Nasir-ud-din Qabacha, the governor of Multan and Sindh, was widely believed to have been marked out for the viceroyalty of Ghazni. Aibek's most dangerous rival was Tajal-Din Yildiz, with whom he engaged in a struggle for possession of Ghazna, first inciting one of Yildiz's officers to seize the place in 1207 and briefly occupying Ghazna in person two years later. Minhaj's description of this conflict as originating over Lahore suggests that yieldir claimed to rule all Muhammad Ghori's eastern territories. Their rivalry seems to have kept Aibek at Lahore during his four year reign, either guarding against an invasion of the Punjab or seeking yet another opportunity to take Ghazna. The dearth of evidence for military operations against independent Hindu states at this time presents a marked contrast with the era of his lieutenancy on behalf of Muhammad Ghori.

Quatb-ad-din died at Lahore, in November 1210 A.,D. of injuries received as a result of a fall from his oven horse which fell upon him while playing 'chaugan' and the high panel of the Saddle pierced his breast. He died instantly and was buried at Lahore on November 4, 1210.

On the Sudden' death of Aibek at Lahore, his gulam Iltutmish was invited into Delhi from Badaun by a partly in the city, headed by the military justiciar Ali-ji-Isma'il and set himself up as ruler. A certain obscurity surrounds his rival Aram Shah, who at one point is called Aibek's son. Hasan-i-Nizami, who ignores Aram Shah and for whom all this is simply a rising against his patron iltutmish by a group of recalcitrant Turks, names as their leader the Sar-i-jandar. They advanced from Lahore to Delhi, where iltutmish met and defeated them is Bagh-i-Jud. Aram Shah is alleged to have been 'martyred'; but whether he was killed in the engagement or put to death as a prisoner, we are not told.

Shams al-Din Iltutmish was at first only one of a number of Muslim rulers in the subcontinent, and his position was highly precarious, even after the overthrow of Aram Shah. In the following century it was remembered that he had been obliged to dispute his new kingdom with amirs who held iqta's in Hindustan by grant from Muizzal-Din Ghori.

The Punjab was hostile to him. Nasir-ud-din Qabacha was

the ruler of the provinces of Sindh and Multan and he had further extended his kingdom to include Bhatinda, Ghurham and Sarusti. The chief of Rajasthan withheld tribute and repudiated allegiance. Ali Murdan, the governor of Lakhnauti in Bengal also declared his independence.

Iltutmish's position was immediately imperiled when yaldiz, the ruler of Ghazni asserted his claims to the Sovereignty of entire Hindustan. He turned out the governor of Lahore appointed by Qabacha, and occupied it. Iltutmish's first opportunity came in 1215-16, when Yildiz was forced out of Ghazni by the Khwarazmshah and fell back on the Panjab. Having wrested Lahore from Qubacha, he then pushed into Delhi territory in an effort to make good his rights over his subordinate Iltutmish, issuing demands of the kind, says Hasan-i-Nizami, that no sovereign could demean himself to answer. Iltutmish met him on 25 January 1216 on the historic battle field of Tarain, near Samana: Yildiz was defeated and incarcerated in Badaun, where he was later put to death. But if the elimination of yildiz conferred independence on Delhi ruler, it did not immediately result is any significant addition to his territory. Lahore was reoccupied by Qubacha, whose empire how stretched from the Arabian Sea and the Indus delta as far with as Nandana and Peshawar. Iltutmish Seized Aibek's old capital late in the winter of 1216-17, Conferring it on his eldest son Nasir al-din Mahmud; but it continued to change hands thereafter, while the two rulers disputed possession of Tabarhindh, Kuhram and Sarsati in the eastern Panjab. Iltutmish was always under the fear that the occupation of the Panjab was most necessary for the safety of the sultanate of Delhi.

In the year 1217, the rival forces encountered each other in the vicinity of Mansura and Qabacha suffered a crushing defeat. The captives who taken in battle were pardoned. This success did not give Iltutmish a complete possession of the panjab, as the chenab and the Jhelum Valleys were still in the possession of the Khokhars. For the administration of this province princes Nasir-ud-din Mahmud an experienced general of the army, was appointed the governor of the Panjab in 1217.

In Iltutmish's early years, there was no guarantee that the former territories of the Ghurids in Sindh and the Panjab would not share the fate of the regions beyond the Indus and be absorbed into the Khwarazmshah. it was fortunate for the fledgling Delhi Sultanate, as indeed for the other powers which had inherited the Ghurid mantle in northern India, that when the Khwararmians appeared in force in the Panjab they came not as conquerors supported by the resources of an

extensive central Asian empire, but as fugitives.

Ilutmish's efforts to gain the panjab were once more undone. Mangbarni established himself in the upper Sindh sagar Doab and contracted a matrimonial alliance with the khokhar chief. This was a very diplomatic of Mangbarni, because Khokhars were hostile to Nasir-ud-din, and consequently Qabacha was practically driven out of the Sindh Sagar Doab.

Ilutmish was shrewd enough to anticipate the deep rooted danger of providing him Shelter. To reverse Ilutmish and his own foreign policy at this stage and to seek the displeasure of more terrible power by receiving the fugitive prince, would have been very unwise. Therefore, Ilutmish politely declined with the pretext that the climate of Lahore was likely to be prejudicial to Mangbarni's health. But at this refusal, Mangbarni prepared himself to avenge himself by further aggression on the Panjab. Ilutmish got ready for military action. Mangbarni not like to fight and he thought it prudent to turn his attention to Qabacha, considering him weak than Ilutmish and being aware of the fact that Qabacha's relations with the Khokhars were not cordial.

The net result of Mangbarni's story in the Panjab was the extinction of Qabacha's power. Sindh sagar Doab and part of Multan passed into the hands of Mangbarni. Even after his departure the western Panjab continued to witness rapid political changes. They upset Ilutmish's plan of consolidation on the west, but helped him to destroy his rival Qabacha, for the latter had to bear the burnt of Mangbarni's invasion and of its aftermath, which weakened his power of resistance. Besides the area dominated by the unsubdued tribes of the salt range, a part of the possessions Mangbarni's Panjab, was now under his Lieutenant, saif-ud-din Hasan Qarlugh, who was to hold it for his master as best as he could. Judging from Mangbarni's alliance with the khokhars, Qarlugh's influence was fairly extensive. However, is the northern Panjab, Ilutmish appears to have succeeded in extending his rule up to Sialkot and Janer (Hajner) and, possibly also Jallandhar.

The governors of Lahore, Multan and Sindh provinces were instructed to include the whole of Panjab. As a result of these instructions, the governors of Lahore and Multan Succeeded in occupying the forts of Nandana, the capital of khokhars tribe and Kunjah which were put under the charge of Aitign. Establishment of these outposts and the preceding was secured for Ilutmish the central, the north-eastern and the western Panjab.

Ilutmish died on April 29, 1236 and his eldest son Feroz, assuming the title of Rukan-ud-Din, ascended the throne on April 30, 1236. He was very weak man, thoroughly sunk in debauchery. The entire administration of the state and real power passed on into the hands of his mother, Turkan. Such of the nobles of the court as could not put up with or tolerate Queen Turkan, decided to put Ilutmish's daughter Razia on the throne. In the mean time Malik Alau-ud-din governor of the Panjab, Malik Izz-ud-Din Kabir Khani-i-Aiaz, governor of Multan and governor of Hansi, in alliance with some other governors of small provinces, hatched a-conspiracy and rebelled. Queen Turkan was taken Prisoner and, subsequently done to death. The Turkish Amirs and some contingents of the royal body-guards also joined hands with Razia and placed her on the throne.

Razia's triumph brought her great Prestige which stabilized her position, but later this very success proved to be the chief cause of her down fall. The turkish nobles conspired against Razia. Razia was put into the custody of Altunia, the governor of Bhatinda, Bahram was proclaimed the sultan of Delhi on April 22, 1239. Altunia married Razia. Soon after, he raised an army especially from the khokhar – Jats and marched on Delhi, but Razia was defeated and fled to Bhatinda. Razia did not loose her courage and made a second effort to achieve the throne, but she was again defeated and later Razia and

Altunia were murdered by some Hindu robbers on 12th December, 1240.

At a time when the Panjab was afflicted with internal dissensions leading to disturbed conditions, it was faced by a still far greater danger in the shape of an incursion by the Mongols who under the leadership of Tayar laid Siege round the city of Lahore. Sirhind writes that "the infidel Mughals obtained possession of the city, many Musalmans became martyrs and their relatives and neighbours were made prisoners. Mongols had actually advanced up to the bank of the River Beas, but soon after, they voluntarily retired from the Panjab.

Balban was chiefly responsible in putting Nasir-ud-din on the throne and, as such, the new Sultan passed on all powers and control of administration to Balban, is consequence of which all important and key posts were given to Balban's relatives. Balban's cousin Sher Khan was given the lofty title of Muazam Khan, Besides being the governor of Lahore and Bhatinda, he was also placed in charge of the governorship of Multan, Ghuram, Sunam, the Sirhind. When Balban ascended the throne, his first task was to eliminate all such influential persons as were holding important posts in the administration. The first victim of this new Policy was his cousin Sher Khan, because as the governor of the frontier provinces he had become so powerful and influential that we could be a danger to Balban's personal authority. Balban appointed in his place his eldest son Prince Sultan whose surname was Taj-ul-Mulk.

The Mongols used to indulge in occasional plundering and looting of the upper Panjab and Delhi. Consequently, for the defence of the north-western frontier and its proper protection, Balban took some concrete measures. He established fairly big cantonments at Lahore, Dipalpur, Samana, Sunam, Ghuram, Jullundur and Sirhind, and in order to Provide them reinforcements, some still stronger and bigger cantonments were added, and they were placed under the command of experienced military officers such as Bughra khan at Samana was made responsible for safeguarding the Beas live and that commander was further directed to work under the overall control of the governor of Multan and Lahore.

Repeated attacks by the Mongols had greatly affected the economic prosperity of the people of the Panjab. Tamar Khan Mongol was keen to bring under his sway some interior parts of the Panjab. In 1285, with a force of twenty thousand cavalry he attacked the province of Lahore. The Mongols, ransacked the entire area around Dipalpur and Lahore and most of the villages were completely devastated. The Afghans were mercilessly butchered. Prince Muhammad, governor of Lahore, Bhatinda and Multan, happened to be at that time at Multan. A fierce Skirmish took place and Prince Muhammad was fatally wounded and later on succumbed to his injuries. Amir Khusrau made this battle the theme of one of his most famous eulogies. Quite a large number of Muslims were killed and in the words of Amir Khusrau "in every home and hamlet of Multan one or other had died for whom the members of his family were wailing and weeping."

After the death of Prince Muhammad his son Kai Khusru was appointed the governor of the Punjab, and both the Provinces of Multan and Lahore were combined and placed under him. Balban died in 1286.

The Turkish nobles, under the guidance of Fakhr-ud-Din, the Kotwal of Delhi, set aside the claims of Balban's hominee Kai-khusru who was at that time the governor of the Punjab, and placed on the throne Kaiqabad, son of Bughra Khan.

As already mentioned, considerable parts of the provinces of Lahore and Multan were within the range of Mongol depre-dations. Even then, in spite of the incompetence of Kaiqabad with its consequent laxity of vigilance, arrangements for defence remained intact and the Mongols could not get an opportunity to advance, or indulge in their usual predatory

activities. However, finding an opportunity, Tamar Khan once again overran the territory from Multan to Lahore and laid waste entire country as for Samana. Quite a large number of Soldiers were taken prisoners. Right up to the Jhelum, the Mongol forces were relentlessly chased and ultimately driven out of the Punjab. Kaiquabad had become indifferent to the affairs of the state and ceased taking interest in them, as a result of which Malik Jalal-ud-Din feroz of the Khilji tribe had usurped all the powers of the state administration. He caused Kaiquabad to be murdered in a country place in 1288 and set himself up as regent of the new infant king. He ascended the throne in 1290.

In the end we can say that, the history of the Punjab for a century right from the advent of the Ghorides up to the death of the last Sultan of the Mamluk dynasty was all chaos. Lahore, the heart of the Punjab, remained an arena of strifes throughout the period, particularly at the time of accession of every new Sultan who managed to capture the throne with the connivance of the governors of Lahore, Multan and of other Small provinces of the Punjab. Lahore and Multan were perpetually the main targets of devastation of the Mughal invaders during this period.

It was with the active help and support of the governors of these provinces that Aibek occupied the throne of Delhi. Iltutmish had to face formidable obstacles while trying to capture the same throne because although the nobles of Delhi were in his favour, he could neither enlist the support of the governors of Lahore, Multan and other prominent nobles of the Punjab, nor their approval. It was for this reason that for many a year Iltutmish could not establish his supremacy over the people of the Punjab. Yalduz, the Ruler of Ghazni, Nasir-ud-Din Qabacha, Mangbarni and the virile Khokhars of the salt Ranges had made the Punjab a cockpit of their mutual

bickerings for the sake of gaining political power.

During the entire period of Iltutmish's reign of over twenty-six years, the Punjab under many of its governors continued to enjoy a good measure of independence. Most of these governors only nominally accepted the suzerainty of the central government and after the death of Iltutmish for the next ten years, the Punjab once again became an arena for mutual hostilities, revolts and bitter contests. Its governors, more or less, remained independent of the centre's control.

Balban got appointed powerful and honest men like Sher Khan and Prince Muhammad as Governors of the Punjab. Balban's iron policy made this province immune from the menace of constant Mughal invasions. He also severely dealt with khokhars who were hostile to the turks and were friendly with the Mughals. Besides all this, Balban tried to curb mutual factions amongst the Amirs with a view to establishing a stable government.

Unlike the great Mughals, who came subsequently, the sultans of the Mamluk Dynasty did not care to recognize and appreciate the talent and enterprising spirit of the non-Muslims. They were, however, given petty posts in the revenue department, or were assigned menial and insignificant duties.

Continual disturbed conditions had adversely affected trade, industry, agriculture and other economic activities. Caravans of businessmen and others could only move from one place to another under the protection of armed military contingents. Even though, off and on, the central Government came with a heavy hand to curb such disruptive forces, yet because of frequent and sudden changes of governors and other officers, such measure proved of little avail.

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